

support of patentability were presented. In particular, the Examiner agreed that the '582 patent may fail to disclose detecting a transmission fault through a periodically initiated process. However, no final agreement on the patentability of the claims was reached, pending the Examiner's further consideration of the claims upon formal submission of a response to the outstanding Office Action.

Claim 1 is directed to an image forming device management system, comprising: (1) a plurality of image forming devices; (2) a central service station for providing a maintenance service for the image forming devices; and (3) a communication control unit connected to each of the image forming devices by a signal line, the communication control unit connecting one of the image forming devices to the central service station by a communication network. Moreover, each of the image forming devices is configured to *detect a transmission fault* from at least one of the central service station and the communication control unit over a predetermined period *through a periodically initiated process* and to display a signal line separation message when the image forming device detects the transmission fault.

Regarding the rejection of Claim 1 as anticipated by the '582 application, the '582 application is directed to an image forming device management system for managing a plurality of image forming devices using an administrative device connected through a communication control unit to the image forming devices. However, Applicants submit that the '582 application fails to disclose image forming devices configured to *detect a transmission fault* from at least one of the central service station and the communication control unit *through a periodically initiated process*. As previously stated, the "Transmitted Normally?" inquiries of Figures 21 and 22 of the '582 application are only initiated when either the remote reporting key is pressed or the self-diagnosis process is started. Moreover, the "Report Normally?" inquiries of Figures 21 and 22 are not made unless the reporting data

was transmitted normally to the communication control unit, in which case there could not be a transmission fault.

Moreover, even if the '582 *reporting* processes shown in Figures 21 and 22 are inhibited when maintenance work is performed on the image forming device,¹ Applicants respectfully submit that this is not a teaching of periodically *initiating* a process for the *detection* of a transmission fault. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of Claim 1 (and dependent Claims 2-7) as anticipated by the '582 application.

Claims 7, 30, and 36 recite limitations analogous to the limitations recited in Claim 1. Accordingly, for the reasons stated above for the patentability of Claim 1, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of Claims 7, 30, and 36 (and all associated dependent claims) as anticipated by the '582 application.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 1 (and dependent Claims 2-6), Claim 7, Claim 30 (and dependent Claims 31-35), and Claim 36 patentably define over the '582 application.

¹ See column 32, lines 34-49, of the '582 application. Applicants note that this section of the '582 application merely discloses that the remote reporting of an abnormality is inhibited during the time period that starts when maintenance commences and ends when either the maintenance work is completed or after a predetermined elapsed time.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Gregory J. Maier
Registration No. 25,599
Attorney of Record
Surinder Sachar
Registration No. 34,423



22850

Tel.: (703) 413-3000

Fax: (703) 413-2220

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